DUELS THAT FAILED

Flash In the Pan Affairs That Originated In Washington.

SOME FAMOUS MEN INVOLVED

The Challenge That Cutting of New York Sent to Breckinridge of Kentucky—The Brooks-Sumner Quarrel and the Pryor-Potter Trouble.

Could the details of the causes of numerous invitations to the field of honor in order to settle differences by a resort to the code duello and the nonmaterialization of these expected hostile meetings be brought to light they would most assuredly prove to be interesting reading matter. Many of these flashes in the pan affairs originated in Washington in the antebellum days.

In the early part of 1854 a big sensation was caused because of a difficulty between John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky and F. B. Cutting of New York, both members of the national house of representatives. It was at the time when the Kansas-Nebraska bill was under discussion. Cutting intimated in a speech that Mr. Breckinridge was partly responsible for an article that was published in the Washington Union, the Democratic organ in the capital, which was offensive to him, and the two gentlemen indulged in a colloquy that was very near a bitter personal quarrel. In the course of it Mr. Cutting made a remark, when the Kentuckian arose and in a quiet but very firm manner asked the New York man to withdraw the statement. The house had been listening to the remarks of these gentlemen very earnestly all the while, and when Cutting said, in answer to Breckinridge's request that he withdraw a specified portion of his remarks (they were assertions that Mr. Breckinridge had been skulking), that he would withdraw nothing, there came a sensation which developed into great excitement when Breckinridge said Cutting had spoken falsely and that he knew he had lied.

Now, when a gentleman called another gentleman a liar in that period of our history it generally meant a fight of some kind, and so it proved in this case, for before the day was over Mr. Cutting, through his friend, a Mr. Maurice, sent a note to Mr. Breckinridge calling upon him to retract "or to make the explanation due from one gentleman to another."

Early next morning Mr. Breckinridge, through his friend, Colonel Hawkins, accepted the challenge. Both men were up to full measurement in the quality of pluck required for a sanguinary battle. An arrangement was made to meet at Silver Spring, in the state of Maryland, which was the residence of Hon. Francis P. Blair. They were going to fight with the ordinary rifle, but they didn't get together. Mutual friends were grieved at the idea of a prospective tragedy which might end the lives of both of these eminent men. Full details of this transaction in the interests of peace were not known, but the reconciliation was effected, though not without urgent remonstrance, and the two became as friendly as ever.

Every one knows of the assault upon Senator Sumner of Massachusetts by Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina. No one seemed to think that a challenge to the South Carolina man would come out of this lamentable affair. Brooks, it is very well known, was intensely angered at remarks made by Mr. Sumner concerning Senator Butler of South Carolina, who was an uncle of Brooks. This was in May, 1856. The Massachusetts senator had said in a speech the day before that Senator Butler showed an incapacity for accuracy, whether in stating the constitution or in stating the law. He also said, "He cannot open his mouth but out there flies a blunder." The excitement over this affair was not confined to Massachusetts and this country, but extended across the sea, particularly to England. Massachusetts was stunned with horror. Even Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison were aroused to anger.

In the meantime Mr. Brooks was awaiting a challenge from some one. Senator Wilson, Sumner's colleague and later vice president of the United States, made a speech in which he said the attack upon Mr. Sumner was "barbarous and ruffianly." Mr. Brooks was prompt to send him a challenge for using these words. Senator Wilson was opposed to "the code" and consequently declined the challenge. He sent word to his challenger, however, that he was ready to defend himself whenever assailed. But some one had to come to the front for the sake of the state that honored Sumner. Anson Burlingame was the man. He was afterward, as nearly every one knows, the American minister to China and the author of the agreement known as the Burlingame treaty. He was at the time of the attack upon Sumner a representative in congress from Massachusetts. He made a speech in which he said that Brooks entered the senate chamber and smote Sumner as Cain smote his brother Abel. Mr. Brooks sought some explanation concerning parts of Burlingame's speech, but the Massachusetts man said he would allow his remarks to interpret themselves, and Mr. Brooks sent him a note—a very polite note—which read as follows:

Sir—You will do me the kindness to indicate some place outside of this District where it will be convenient for you to negotiate in reference to the differences between us.

On the same day Mr. Burlingame answered as follows:

Sir—Your note of this date was placed in my hands by General Lane this afternoon. In reply I have to say I will be at the Clifton House, Canada side of Niagara falls, Saturday next at 10 a. m. to "negotiate" in reference to any "difference between us" which, in your judgment, may require settlement outside of this District.

This expected duel was another that did not materialize. It was prevented by some means. The minions of the law got in their work, and the gentlemen were put under heavy bonds not to violate the statutes.

During the discussions upon the Lecompton measure the Kansas-Nebraska act and the repeal of the Missouri compromise measure there was more acrimony in congress than in any other era in its existence—that is, when folks began to call the house a bear garden. It was almost as bad in the senate. It was during a debate on the Kansas-Nebraska act in the senate Senator Douglas of Illinois and Senator Green of Missouri (poor old Jim Green, who is never spoken of by those who knew him but with pity for the unfortunate drinking habit that occasioned his downfall) had trouble.

Green in his speech said that Douglas did not dare to controvert him. It was a debate in which Jefferson Davis got mixed up, and there were personalities all around. There was some movement toward a duel at that time between Douglas and Green. Notes had passed, and everybody expected there would be something going on at Bladensburg, but friends intervened and prevented a hostile meeting.

Then there comes to mind that famous Pryor-Potter trouble, which grew out of a charge that Potter, who was a Wisconsin man, had interpolated the manuscript of the house reporter. The quarrel that began over that resulted in Mr. Pryor, who represented the Richmond (Va.) district, sending Potter a challenge. Potter, while disclaiming allegiance to the code, said he would fight Pryor indoors or out in the District with bowie knives. Pryor declined to fight in this way on the ground that the weapons were barbarous, inhuman and not used among gentlemen. Then General Lander, who was Potter's friend, offered to fight Pryor in any way, but his offer was declined on the ground that he (Pryor) had had no quarrel with Lander.

There were other duels expected in Washington in the dueling days that never took place, but those cited here are about the most important of the episodes.—Washington Post.

Mirrors as Detectives.

"It is not solely to please the lady patrons," said an interior decorator, "that mirrors so abound in shops. They serve another and more important purpose. They help detect shoplifters. If you should study the various watchers in the employ of big retail stores you would find that they don't watch the patrons directly. They look at their reflections in the mirrors. Of course their watching done that way is unperceived. The shoplifter glances at the watcher, sees that his back is to her and secretes a pair of silk stockings in her shirt waist. The next moment she feels an unfriendly and terrifying tap on her shoulder, and the watcher, who has caught her by the mirror's aid, bids her sternly to accompany him to the office."—New York Press.

THE "MARSEILLAISE."

It Was Written by Rouget de Lisle In One Brief Hour.

On April 25, 1792, Rouget de Lisle, the military engineer, who had assumed the aristocratic prefix to become an officer, was a guest at a banquet given by Baron Dietrich, first mayor of Strassburg.

Patriotic excitement was at its height. "Marchons!" "Aux armes, citoyens!" were phrases on every lip. But as the champagne went round the ladies grew weary and pleaded for another topic. Patriotic songs? A hymn for the army of the Rhine? Something better than the jingling "Ca ira!" The host first suggested a public competition and a prize. Then he turned to Rouget de Lisle and asked him to "compose a noble song for the French people."

Rouget de Lisle tried to excuse himself. Again the champagne passed round, and just as the party broke up a fellow officer about to quit Strassburg next day begged De Lisle for a copy of his forthcoming song.

"I make the promise on behalf of your comrade," Dietrich replied.

Rouget de Lisle reached his lodging close by, but not to sleep. His violin lay on the table. Taking it up, he struck a few chords. Soon a melody seemed to grow under his fingers. No sooner had he put down the notes than he dashed off the words.

Thus having in a brief hour secured for himself an undying name he threw himself upon his bed and slumbered heavily.—Reader Magazine.

Flattered Him.

"You ought to have been more tactful. You should have flattered him."

"I did flatter him."

"Flattered him? Why, you told him he was half a fool!"

"Well, wasn't that flattering him?"

The Emancipation of the Chaperons.

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of the man before her, "I might be able to endure everything and yet feel fresh, but, being a woman and forty-one"—

"Gertrude," interrupted Merriwether in a tone of solemn joy, "are you forty-one?"

"Of course I am," she responded almost irritably. "You know that I am."

"Ye-es," he replied vaguely, coming nearer, "but I didn't know that you knew it!"

"I have every reason to know it"—the tears were near the surface now—"when skating gives me the rheumatism, and dancing the headache, and that sleigh ride"— She spread her hands out in a gesture of despair. "I can't endure it any longer. I'm going home tomorrow on the 9:10 train and leave you to chaperon. Nothing seems to tire you." The tears had reached her lashes, and she turned her head away.

Merriwether sat down beside her uninvited. "Gertrude," he began in a voice in which rang a satisfaction out of harmony with his announcement, "the exertion attendant on chaperoning this house party and keeping up with you has given me the rheumatism in every joint and muscle, and not only the headache—the effect has penetrated to my disposition, which is"—

A door opened somewhere, and a burst of music interrupted him. "Peace on earth, good will to men."

The door closed, and silence reigned in the library. A realization of the spirit of the words came to Merriwether. His light manner dropped from him. He leaned over and laid his hand on Gertrude's. "Let's be old and peaceful together, dear. Don't go back tomorrow. Spend Christmas here—with me."

The firelight played softly over the woman's face. She glanced up with a smile which was tremulous in spite of her mocking words, "Now that I think of it, Bruce, I haven't bought my ticket yet, and—it is more comfortable to be old!"